Funding of Political Parties for Elections

616. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that industrial houses and corporate donors contribute funds to the various political parties of the country to meet their election expenses;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there is no law in the country governing contribution to the political parties;

(c) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(d) if not, whether Government propose to enact a law in this matter and when ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ) : (a) and (b) Under section 293-A of the Companies Act, 1956 Government companies and companies which are in existence for less than three years are prohibited to make political donations. Other companies can, however, make political donations upto 5 per cent of the average net profits as determined by law to any political party or to any person. Such donations are to be disclosed in the profit and loss account of the companies.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Multi-member Election Commission

617. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have been urged to set up a multi-member Election Commission with independent Secretariat on the pattern of Comptroller and Auditor General of India;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereon;

(c) whether Government propose to bring forward a comprehensive bill on electoral reforms; and

(d) whether there is any move to convene an all party meeting on the aforesaid issue ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ) : (a) and (b) A demand to set up a multi-member Election Commission has been made, but there is no such proposal at present under consideration of the Government. The proposal to set up an independent Secti. for the Election Commission is one of the various proposals on electoral reforms under consideration of the Government but no final decision has yet been aken.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Yes, Sir.

Recommendations of Working Groups

618. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Working Groups set up by the Law Ministers' Conference held in October, 1992 have made several important recommendations;

(b) if so, what are the recommendations; and

(c) whether Government have processed these recommendations for implementation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement showing the recommendations is annexed. *(See below).*

(c) The recommendations have been forwarded to all State Governments and to the Chief Justices of various High Courts. It is proposed to consider these recommendations further at a conference to be held soon.

Statement

Recommendations of Law Ministers' Working Groups

(a) *Working Group-I*

Periodic review of the strength of Judges in each High Court in consultation with the constitutional functionaries in the States concerned and the Chief Justice of India for dealing efficiently with arrears of pending cases;

Initiation of action for filling up vacancies in the judiciary at least six to nine months in advance and the prescription of specific time-limits within which the proposals ought to be processed at different stages so as to ensure appointment of judges as soon as vacancies arise;

Upto 50% of the vacancies in each High Court to be filled up from the judicial officers of subordinate judiciary;

Exercise of greater care in the appointment of judges so as to ensure that competent persons of unimpeachable integrity are appointed as Judges of High Courts;